



Cobb County Board of Commissioners

Tim Lee, Chairman

Comm. Dist.
All

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TO: David Hankerson, County Manager

FROM: Tim Lee, Chairman

This item has been electronically signed by:
Tim Lee, Chairman

DATE: January 26, 2016

PURPOSE

To authorize the Recreation Board work with County staff, under the direction of the County Manager, and under the supervision of the Parks and Recreation Director, to revisit the issuance of the parks bonds approved by voters in November, 2008.

BACKGROUND

Cobb County combined with city, school, state and federal entities is fortunate to be home to more than 140 parks, covering more than 16,000 acres of land in our great community.

In 2008, Cobb County voters passed a referendum authorizing the Board of Commissioners to issue Park Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$40,000,000. The referendum stated that bonds, if issued, shall be used to fund all or a portion of the cost of acquiring land for use as public parks. The underlying premise has always been that the bonds would not be issued unless it could be accomplished without raising property taxes.

Following the passage of the referendum, a Parks Bond Citizen Advisory Council was convened and it developed a recommended list of 29 parcels for consideration for purchase. Simultaneously, the national and local economy entered into a deep recession. Unfortunately, the impact of the recession on Cobb County was such that it was impossible to issue the park bonds without a subsequent hike in the millage rate. This still stands true today.

The referendum that was passed by voters stated specifically that the \$40 million was to be paid in pre-defined increments, as outlined in the actual referendum, over a period of 12 years. As each year has gone by, those increments expire. Therefore, the full \$40 million is no longer available. As the debt service for the parks bonds issued in 1996 and 2006 is set to expire in 2016 and 2017, there is a possibility that 2009 bonds can be issued without a millage rate increase.

It is advisable now, through the approval of this agenda item, to authorize the existing Recreation Board to revisit the possibility of issuing the 2008 park bonds and to establish goals for moving this initiative forward, as set forth below:

1. To request that the Recreation Board work with County staff under the direction of the County Manager to revisit the issuance of the parks bonds approved by voters in November, 2008.
2. The Recreation Board shall meet with the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation as soon as possible, but no later than March 25, 2016, to discuss goals, tasks and a timeline for moving forward.
3. The goals for this initiative are to include, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Review list of 29 properties originally identified by the Parks advisory panel in 2009 to determine which properties are still available, that the seller is still willing and the present value and cost and determine if these properties should be put on an updated list to be presented to the Board of Commissioners.
 - b. Review, with Cobb County staff, the current inventory of parks in Cobb County, by district, under new commission districts that go into effect 2017, to include Cobb County active, passive and undeveloped park facilities, City, school, state and federal parkland.
 - c. Use this assessment to prioritize where the greatest gaps in parks and green space are in the County.
 - d. Compare and contrast properties still available from the original list to current assessment and identify additional property, with a special focus on floodplain and floodprone properties that can be considered for purchase including acreage, current value and cost and whether or not there is a willing seller. The Recreation Board will work closely with staff, under direction of county manager and under supervision of Parks and Recreation Director to fulfill these goals.
4. Seek public input through five open houses including one per district (at location selected by District Commissioner, under new commission districts that go into effect 2017) and a countywide open house at Administration building.
5. Conduct official public hearing at a Board of Commissioners meeting prior to presenting final recommendation to Board.
6. The Recreation Board will present its initial recommendation to the Board at the October 25, 2016 work session.

FUNDING

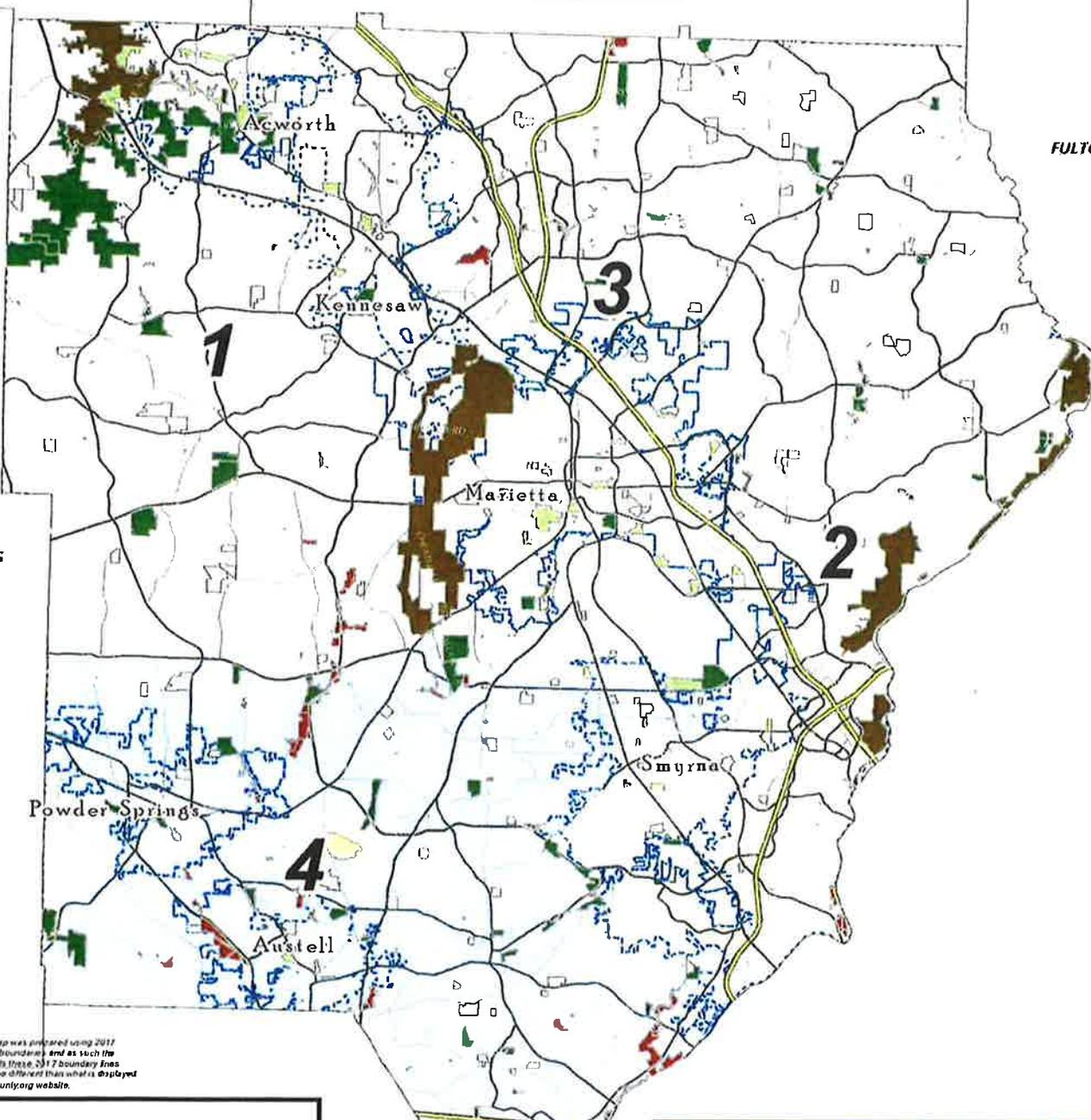
N/A

RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Commissioners authorize the Recreation Board to work with County staff, under the direction of the County Manager, to revisit the issuance of the parks bonds approved by voters in November, 2008.

ATTACHMENTS

- ▣ Parks and Greenspace Inventory



Disclaimer Note: This map was developed using 2017 Commissioner District boundaries and as such the data contained represents the 2017 boundary lines. These boundaries may be different than what is displayed currently on the CobbCounty.org website.

LEGEND

- PUBLIC PROPERTIES - FEMA FLOODPLAINS
- GOLF COURSES - NON GOVERNMENTAL
- CITIES
- PARKS**
- COUNTY
- FEDERAL
- CITY
- COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS**
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

| Cobb County: | Acres: |
|---|---------------|
| Public Properties - FEMA Floodplains | 1,401 |
| Schools (Average Greenspace Calculated) | 1,499 |
| Public Golf Courses (Non Governmental) | 152 |
| Cobb Parks | 5,169 |
| Federal Parks | 5,919 |
| City Parks | 1,190 |
| Trails - Outside of Park Boundaries | 901 |
| Total Acres: | 16,231 |



PARKS AND GREENSPACE INVENTORY

